

be implemented in software, firmware, hardware, or a combination thereof.

Preferably, services system 110 is implemented in software as an executable program.

As such, services system 110 can be executed by a special or general purpose digital computer, such as a personal computer, workstation, minicomputer, or mainframe

5 computer. Typically, the services system is implemented by a server that is configured to receive inputs from and/or provide outputs to various devices, such as portable computing devices (see FIG. 1). An example of a computer that can implement services system 110 is shown schematically in FIG. 5.

Generally, in terms of hardware architecture, computer 500 includes a

10 processor 502, memory 504, and one or more input and/or output (I/O) devices 506 (or peripherals) that are communicatively coupled via a local interface 508. Software in memory 504 can include one or more separate programs, each of which comprises an ordered listing of executable instructions for implementing logical functions. In the example of FIG. 5, the software in the memory 504 includes services system 110
15 and a suitable operating system (O/S) 510.

The functionality of a representative embodiment of the services system is depicted in the flowchart of FIG. 6. As shown in FIG. 6, services system or method 110 may be construed as beginning at block 610, where information is received from a user. Preferably, the information provided to the services system includes information
20 corresponding to the user's location. In response to receiving the information, the services system attempts to correlate data, which may be stored in a database, for example, with the user's location (block 620). Thereafter, such as depicted in block 630, the services system enables data corresponding to the user's location to be provided to the user. For instance, the information could be provided to the user via a
25 portable computing device.

Embodiments of the services system also can be configured to provide location-specific information to a user when the user does not directly communicate information corresponding to the user's location to the services system.

Representative functionality of one such embodiment is depicted in the flowchart of

5 FIG. 7. As shown in FIG. 7, services system or method 110 may be construed as beginning at block 710, where information is received from a user. In block 720, a determination is made as to whether the received information includes information corresponding to the user's location. If it is determined that information corresponding to the user's location has not been received, the process may proceed to

10 block 730. At block 730, a determination is made as to whether the user has a cell phone, *e.g.*, whether the information has been provided to the services system via a cell phone. If it is determined that the user has a cell phone, the process may proceed to block 740 where the user's location is determined based on the current cell being utilized by the cell phone. Similar to that described before in relation to the input

15 system, this functionality may involve querying the user's cell phone service provider to determine the user's cell location and/or prompting the user's cell phone to provide information corresponding to the user's current cell.

20 Regardless of the manner used to determine the user's location, once the location is determined, the process preferably proceeds to block 750 where the user's location is correlated with information, *e.g.*, data that is intended for being provided to user's of the services system. Thereafter, such as depicted in block 760, the services system enables data corresponding to the user's location to be provided to the user. If, however, it was determined in block 730 that the user does not have a cell phone, the process may proceed to block 770 where the services system may request location

25 information from the user. For instance, the services system may provide the user

with a selection, *e.g.*, a menu, of locations from which to choose. Thereafter, if location information corresponding to the user is received, the process may proceed to block 750 and proceed as described before. The process also may proceed to block 750 if it was determined in block 720 that the information received from the user

5 includes location information.

Based on the foregoing, it should be appreciated that information systems of the invention can be configured to enable location-specific information to be provided to a user. In some embodiments, the ability of the information system to determine a user's location is facilitated by an input system, which may reside on a portable computing device, and/or a services system, which typically resides on a server.

10 Additionally, providing location-specific information to a user can be accomplished, in some embodiments, by preventing non-location-specific information from being provided to a user.

The foregoing description has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Modifications or variations are possible in light of the above teachings. The embodiment or embodiments discussed, however, were chosen and described to provide the best illustration of the principles of the invention and its practical application to thereby enable one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the

15 invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. For instance, the foregoing description refers to the "user's location." This term should not be construed to mean only the user's exact geographic position, as some embodiments may be adapted to provide information to a user based on the region occupied by the user. All such modifications and

20 variations, are within the scope of the invention as determined by the appended claims